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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/RD/SCA, DS/DSS/ITA, CA AND SA/INS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY COLOMBO EAC MEETING 12/17/2008 -
RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO POST TRAVEL POLICY

11. (SBU) Summary: AmEmbassy Colombo convened an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting on December 17, 2008. In addition to discussing post's security posture during the upcoming holiday period, the EAC reviewed proposed revisions to post's restricted travel zone and travel policy. The EAC-recommended revisions to the policy included relaxing the requirement for RSO and other embassy offices to vet requests for official travel to the Eastern Province and allowing limited personal travel to limited areas in the Eastern Province. End summary.

12. (SBU) On December 17, 2008, AmEmbassy Colombo convened an EAC meeting. Present for the meeting were Deputy Chief of Mission, Regional Security Officer, Assistant Regional Security Officer, Regional Affairs Officer, Political Officer, Economic Officer, Management Officer, Consular Officer, Public Affairs Officer, USAID Director, Defense Attache' OPSCO, International Broadcasting Bureau Station Chief, and Community Liaison Officer. Among the agenda items for the meeting was a review of post's restricted travel policy.

13. (SBU) The RSO recommended that the EAC consider revising the restricted travel zone to reflect the current situation in the Eastern Province. RSO noted that post had not amended the restricted travel zone for a few years, and not since the Government of Sri Lanka had regained control of the Eastern Province from Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2006 - 2007. The RSO averred that the current security situation would allow revisions to the areas that required RSO vetting and that are considered off-limits for personal travel.

14. (SBU) The RSO recommended revising the restricted travel zone to include the following areas:

-- All of the districts in the Northern Province - Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Vavuniya

-- An area of Anradhapura District (in North Central Province) that lies north of the A14 Highway to Medawachchiya; the road from Medawachchiya to Horowupotana; and, the A12 leading into the Eastern Province

-- The Eastern Province, with the exceptions of the A6 Highway corridor to Trincomalee; Trincomalee Town from China Bay to Nilaveli; Maha Oya Town (in Ampara District) and the area west of Maha Oya Town; the area south of the A4 Highway leading to Pottuvil (the A4 is not in the restricted zone)

15. (SBU) The EAC concurred with the RSO's suggested revisions to the restricted travel zone. The EAC also recommended that RSO and other Embassy offices continue to vet and approve all official travel to the Northern Province. American citizen Mission employees may not travel at all to the Northern Province or the restricted areas of the Eastern Province for personal reasons. Mission employees may journey to the

Eastern Province restricted areas for official purposes only without seeking DCM approval via the RSO. However, for official travel to the Eastern Province, employees must provide full details of their itinerary to the RSO not less than 24 hours prior to commencing travel. American citizen Mission members may travel for personal reasons to the areas listed as exceptions in para. 4 above. However, even for personal travel to Trincomalee Town, Maha Oya Town, and areas south of the A4 in Ampara District, Amcit Mission employees must notify the RSO. Travelers must file their itinerary in the RSO's Intranet-based locator database at least 24 hours prior to departing Colombo. Post's travel policy still prohibits Amcit Mission members' use of public buses and trains; prohibits travel during hours of darkness within the restricted travel areas; and, discourages travel after dark countryside outside urban areas (for traffic safety purposes). Post will announce these revisions to the Mission and official Americans by posting a Travel Policy Security Directive. Post is amending the Country Specific Information sheet and Travel Warning to reflect the changes and notify the general American community.

16. (U) Post continues to monitor closely the security situation and will report further developments, if any, septel. POC for this message is RSO Michael V. Perkins, who may be contacted at 94.11.249.8885, 94.11.249.8888 (MSG Post 1 after regular business hours), or via the classified and unclassified email systems.
Blake